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BRUSSELS PASS USEU FOR AGMINCOUNSELOR  
STATE FOR EB; EUR/ERA, EUR/WE, EUR/PPD, IIP AND ECA  
EEB/TPP/ABT(SPIRNAK);  
STATE PASS USTR FOR MURPHY;  
USDA/OS/JOHANNIS/TERPSTRA;  
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FAA/YOUNG;  
EU POSTS PASS TO AGRICULTURE AND ECON  
GENEVA FOR USTR, ALSO AGRICULTURE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAGR](#) [ETRD](#) [KPAO](#) [EU](#) [FR](#)

SUBJECT: FY 2007 AG BIOTECH OUTREACH - FRANCE

REF: (A) 2006 State 202514; (B) PARIS 515

1. Summary: There is a strong disconnect in France between farmers, consumers and politicians on the issues of need, utilization and implementation of biotechnology. The Embassy can help create opportunities for stakeholders to explore their differences and find common ground for acceptance of biotech benefits. As France can serve as a stopping-off point for travel to key countries earmarked for the FY 2007 Biotech Outreach program (ref A), Embassy proposes that U.S. biotech speakers consider incorporating a stop in Paris or other French city in their travel plans. We would be pleased to arrange meetings for the speakers with a range of French sophisticated stakeholders open to discussion, as well as public diplomacy events as appropriate. France is a key player in all major international talks related to biotechnology. The modest additional increment of a Paris step-over would bring tremendous potential benefits in getting our message out to a critical audience. End Summary.

Growing Interest for Ag Biotech in France  
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2. Despite visible anti-biotech actions from activists, overly-cautious French authorities and reluctant consumers, French farmers increasingly accept agricultural biotechnology: the acreage planted for commercial biotech corn mushroomed from zero in 2004 to 5,000 hectares in 2006 and could reach 50,000 hectares in 2007. The Embassy is working with a number of U.S. ag biotech companies who enjoy support of farmers, but who have been targeted by anti-biotech activists (ref B). In addition, Embassy has developed a network of key contacts within the biotech sector, including regulatory authorities, research agencies, farmers groups, companies and the media who are open to discussion and eager to learn more about biotechnology and the U.S. system.

Suggestions for Actions in FY 2007  
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3. With presidential and parliamentary elections this spring, Embassy considers 2007 to be a key year to underscore the promise of biotechnology in France. Although we recognize that France is not listed as a key country (REF A), we would like -- to the extent

possible -- to take advantage of any opportunities presented by the Biotech Outreach program. As France is involved in international discussions on biotech (Catagena Protocol, Codex Alimentarius, WTO negotiations), French audiences and opinion makers would benefit by more discussion on the topic.

¶4. As several countries geographically close to France are listed as key ones for the FY 2007 Biotech Outreach (Germany, Czech Republic, Romania, Ukraine, Russia and Tunisia), we propose that U.S. biotech speakers traveling to these countries under the Biotech Outreach program consider incorporating a stop in Paris within their agendas. We would undertake to arrange meetings with a range of stakeholders or one-on-one meetings, depending on the issues involved.

#### Example of Successful Past Actions

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¶5. The French audience in September 2005 at a round table discussion with Madelyn Spirnak, senior DOS advisor for agricultural biotechnology, was very positive; we continue to receive favorable comments about this event.

¶6. While Embassy attempts to engage on all fronts, we would benefit by more frequent expert speakers in France to advance the GMO dialogue, a key MPP objective supported by several Embassy sections.

¶7. Note: This cable responds to ref A specifically seeking program suggestions for EB funds. Post would coordinate any program so funded with its established PD speaker program (through IIP).

Rosenblatt